

About

My name is Alexander Evison and I am an 18-year-old volunteer with Project Trust in Botswana. I arrived at my project alongside my Project Trust partner (Jamie Porter) and two JIA volunteers in mid-August and will continue to volunteer here until August 2017.

I live and work at a primary school for troubled boys called Bana ba Metsi (Children by the Water). My role at the project is to teach the boys various subjects in the morning and to then supervise their development work in the afternoon. I also, alongside the other volunteers, run clubs and swimming sessions for the boys to attend in their free time.



Bana ba Metsi

Bana ba Metsi Primary School was founded in 2000 by Mr Steve Harpt, who was inspired to set up a school for troubled, disadvantaged boys after he caught a boy stealing from his house in nearby Shakawe.

The school is for boys aged 11-20 who have dropped out of mainstream education for various reasons (including habitual nonattendance, gun crime, drugs and alcohol, etc.) and for boys who have never attended an education establishment before. Initially twelve boys attended the school, however it now caters for around 50 boys.

Bana ba Metsi aims to provide the boys with an opportunity to choose a different, positive path for their future. They attend lessons each morning and learn vital trade skills during their development work in the afternoons.

My Duties

As a volunteer at BBM, I have a very special and rewarding role in the school eco-system. Being the same age as some of the boys attending the school, us volunteers are able to form unique relationships with the boys inside and outside of class.

Officially I have been working as the school's computing teacher over the past three months, however I have also spent much of my time teaching the boys more traditional subjects, such as Maths, English, Agriculture and RMPS.

Our development work usually consists of driving to get firewood or river-sand, bricklaying and any other jobs that need doing. We work alongside the boys every day and it is probably the most enjoyable part of the day for everyone.

I also supervise swimming sessions and run the school's running club. These provide the boys with positive means to use their energy.



The Boys

Although all of the boys at BBM have troubled pasts and can be quite challenging at times, they are all very entertaining to be with and over my time here I have forged strong relationships with many of them.

As the boys' dormitories are only 100 metres away from our house, living at BBM is very much like joining a big family. Every day the boys will come round to our house to chat with us and to play games, such as snap, snakes and ladders and hot-potato.

The six swimming sessions we supervise each week provide us with a great opportunity to play with the boys. I for one, always look forward to swimming, as playing water-polo with the boys or simply just swimming with them, is always very enjoyable for all involved.



Memorable Moments

Over my first few months here, I have been lucky enough to have many memorable experiences.

At the end of September, I competed alongside the boys and people from the neighbouring villages, in a 10km race in celebration of Bots 50. I was responsible for preparing and selecting boys for the race, which culminated in me organising extra running club sessions to get everyone fit and ready. When the day came, the whole school helped to make the day a success, with the non-runners cheering on their friends and handing out water. I came 7th in the race, which I was very proud of.

Also in September, we went on a school trip to Gaborone to celebrate Bots 50 in the national stadium. It was truly awe-inspiring to experience the vibrant celebrations first-hand and I will never forget how happy all of the boys were throughout the whole trip.



Alexander Evison's Volunteering in Botswana



My new life as a volunteer
in Botswana